

GUIDANCE ON SELF-ISOLATION AND TESTING

When should you request a test?

- ✓ If you have any of the **primary symptoms of coronavirus** or you are asked to book a test by a medical or public health professional (including Public Health England, NHS Test & Trace, or the Early Alert Service).
- ✗ Please do not book a test if you do not have coronavirus symptoms: a negative result will not allow you to end any self-isolation period early; and may provide false reassurance. If you have other symptoms, self-isolate for 24 hours to see whether you develop any coronavirus symptoms.

Why do you need to self-isolate and for how long?

There are **two reasons** why you may be required to self-isolate: the **duration** depends on the broad reason; and the **effective start date** depends on the specific circumstances.

(1) You have COVID-19:

- You must self-isolate for **10 days**, calculated **from the day your COVID-19 symptoms began**.
- You can resume your normal way of life after 10 days unless you still have a fever, vomiting, or diarrhoea – in which case, continue to self-isolate until you feel better + a further 48 hrs after any vomiting or diarrhoea.

(2) You are considered at high risk of having been exposed to COVID-19:

- You must self-isolate for **14 days** in case you are incubating the virus. The date this is calculated **from** varies depending on your circumstances:

If any member of your **household** has COVID-19

From the date the **first** member of the household developed **symptoms**

If you have been in **recent close contact**[†] with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19

[†] see definition overleaf

From the date of your **last contact** with that person, if known (or from the date you are notified if you do not know their identity)

If you are quarantining on **arrival** in the UK **from overseas**

From the date of your **arrival**

- If you do not develop symptoms, you may resume your normal way of life after the 14 days.
- A **negative test result** will **not allow you to stop your self-isolation** before the end of the 14 days. Please only request a test if you have primary symptoms of coronavirus or are asked to do so by a medical/public health professional.
- But if you do develop symptoms and test positive for COVID-19 during the 14 days, then your self-isolation is extended by another 10 days (starting from the time your symptoms began) in line with (1) above.

When should you start to self-isolate? What is the trigger point?

Self-isolation aims to break links in the chain of transmission: to reduce the risk that a single case (the 'Index') turns into a cluster of cases or an outbreak. The closer you are to the Index, the sooner you should self-isolate.

If you are:	The Index (X)	A member of X's household (H)	A recent close contact of X (C)	A recent close contact of C or of H (O)
If X develops symptoms	Immediately self-isolate pending test result	Immediately self-isolate pending test result	Stay alert for your own symptoms	No action required in respect of X's symptoms
X tests positive	Continue self-isolation (see 1, above)	Continue self-isolation (see 2, above)	Self-isolate (see 2, above)	No action required unless H or C tests positive
X tests negative	Self-isolate until fever, vomiting, or diarrhoea have stopped	No longer need to self-isolate in respect of X's symptoms	No need to self-isolate in respect of X	No action required in respect of X's symptoms

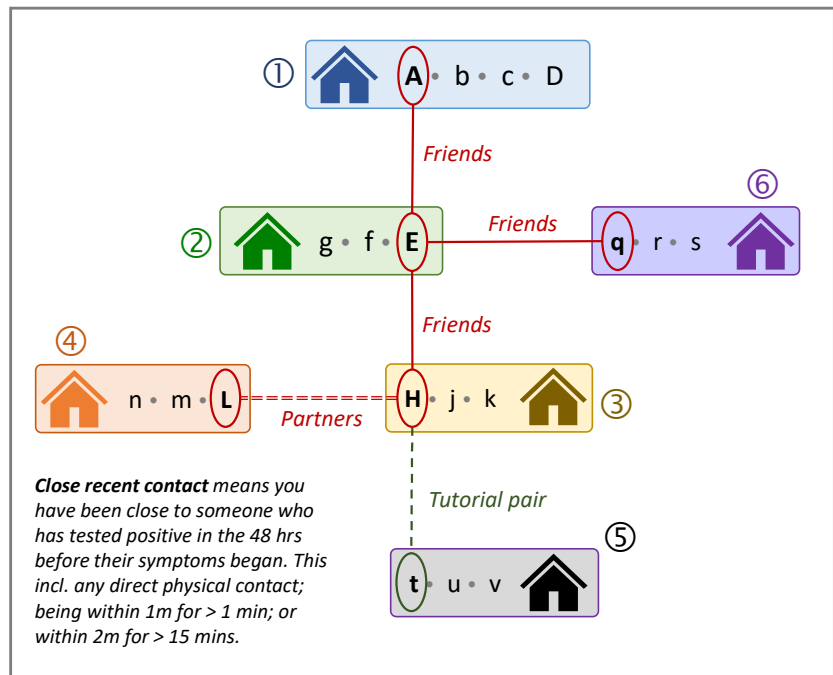
Note: the table above applies solely to self-isolation requirements **in relation to X's symptoms**.

If there are other reasons for X, H, C, or O to self-isolate they should continue to do so, irrespective of X's test result.

Illustrative scenario: self-isolation requirements over time as the virus spreads from an Index case

Chronology of events and symptoms (anyone shown in lower case does not display or develop COVID symptoms)

- 1 Sep - pm **A + E + H** go to a bar
Not socially distanced
- 2 Sep - am **E** meets friend **q**
Not socially distanced
- 3 Sep - am **A** develops COVID symptoms and is tested that afternoon
A alerts **E** (who self-isolates) and **H** (who does not)
- 3 Sep - pm **H** has ½ hr class with **t**
Socially distanced + face coverings
- 4 Sep - am **H** meets their partner **L**
Not socially distanced
- 4 Sep - pm **A**'s test result is positive
- 5 Sep - pm **H** develops COVID symptoms
- 7 Sep - pm **H**'s test result is positive
- 9 Sep **D** develops COVID symptoms and tests positive
- 11 Sep **L** develops COVID symptoms and tests positive
- 12 Sep **E** develops a fever but tests negative for COVID-19



Who should do what and when?

Household 1 <i>Index (A) and household (2 cases)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All members of the household self-isolate on 3 Sep, when A develops symptoms, pending test result. • A self-isolates for 10 days (to 13 Sep), by which time their symptoms have stopped. • As they do not develop symptoms, b and c stop self-isolating after 14 days (on 17 Sep). • The clock starts again for D when they develop symptoms: they must self-isolate for 10 days from 9 Sep (i.e. to 19 Sep). A, b, and c do not need to extend their self-isolation period due to D's result.
Household 2 <i>Close contact of A develops fever but tests negative</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • E <u>must</u> self-isolate once A's positive result is known (on 4 Sep) but voluntarily does so on 3 Sep when alerted by A. E has no symptoms: so household (f, g) does not need to self-isolate at this point. • When E develops a fever (on 12 Sep), f and g must self-isolate until E's test result is known. • As the test result (received on 13 Sep) is negative, f and g are released from self-isolation on 13 Sep. But E must continue to self-isolate until 15 Sep (which = 14 days after close contact with A).
Household 3 <i>Close contact of A delays self-isolation; tests positive</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H did not self-isolate when first alerted by A but <u>must</u> self-isolate once A's result is known (on 4 Sep) and should stay in self-isolation until 15 Sep (which = 14 days after close contact with A). • As H initially has no symptoms, household (j, k) does not need to self-isolate at this point. • When H develops symptoms (5 Sep), j and k should self-isolate. Because H tests positive, j and k continue to self-isolate for 14 days (to 19 Sep).
Household 4 <i>High-risk close contact (L) of close contact (H) of A</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • L does not need to self-isolate when A develops symptoms: at that point, they are a third contact (close contact of a close contact). Nor do m and n. • The situation changes when H develops symptoms. As L and H are in a relationship, their risk level is similar to being in a household together: so L should ideally self-isolate when H develops symptoms (5 Sep) – pending test results – and <u>must</u> do so from 7 Sep, when H's positive result is known. L's 14-day period runs from 5 to 19 Sep. m and n do not need to self-isolate at this point. • Clock starts again for L when they develop symptoms and test positive: they must self-isolate for 10 days from 11 Sep (to 21 Sep) or until they are better (whichever is later). • m and n self-isolate for 14 days from the date L develops symptoms (11 Sep to 25 Sep).
Household 5 <i>No close contact</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • t does not need to self-isolate when A develops symptoms: they are a third contact. • Nor does t need to self-isolate when H develops symptoms: COVID-secure delivery of teaching means they do not constitute a 'close contact'. As a precaution, they should stay alert for symptoms.
Household 6 <i>Close contact of close contact</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • q does not need to self-isolate when A develops symptoms (3 Sep): they are a third contact. • Nor does q need to self-isolate when E develops symptoms (12 Sep) and books a test: E's household should self-isolate until the result is known; but E's close contacts only need to 'stay alert' (if warned). • r and s do not need to self-isolate in relation to any of the cases in this scenario.